

“Judgment of experience”  
&  
“Judgment of perception”  
in Kant

A Study of Descriptive Aspect  
in Kant’s Epistemology  
Jin SASAKI (KU)

# Introduction : Background

- Kant's distinction of Judgment in "*Prolegomena*" (1783)
  - Judgment of experience (Erfahrungsurteil)
  - Judgment of perception (Wahrnehmungsurteil)
- This distinction doesn't appear in both editions of "*Critique of pure reason*" (1781/1787).
- ⇒ How should we understand this distinction?

# Contents

- 1. What are “Judgment of experience” and “Judgment of perception”?
- 2. Two main interpretations
- 3. There are two contexts in Kant’s Epistemology

# 1.1 Definition

- Definition of two judgments (*Prolegomena*, §18)
  - “Empirical judgments, so far as they have objective validity, are **judgments of experience** ; but those which are only subjectively valid, I name mere **judgments of perception.**”

# 1.2 Other features of two Judgments

## Judgment of perception

- Only Subjectively Valid
- Without Categories
- doesn't contain the reference to an external object. (is concerned only with perceptions)

## Judgment of experience

- Objectively Valid
- With Categories
- contains the reference to an external object

*Prolegomena*, §18~§25

# 1.3 Question again

- “JE” has no problem.
  - This is identical with the concept “Judgment”, which Kant uses in the first Critique.
  - → It seems that “JP” doesn’t belong to the first Critique.
- Where is the best position of “JP” in Kant’s Epistemology?

# Contents

- 1. What are “Judgment of experience” and “Judgment of perception”?
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- 3. There are two contexts in Kant’s Theory of Recognition

# 2.1 By-Product Interpretation

- By G. Prauss
- Main thesis :
  - “JP” is a by-product of the transition from 1<sup>st</sup> edition to 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the first Critique.



# 2.1 By-Product Interpretation

- Evidence :
  - There is a huge rewrite between two editions, in the section of ‘Transcendental Deduction’.
- Motivation :
  - This interpretation **can explain the absence** of “JP” in both editions of the first Critique.

## 2.2 Vanity Interpretation

- By N. Kemp Smith, H. J. Paton, etc.
- Main thesis :
  - This distinction is vain or redundant.
    - There is no position of “JP”.
- Reason :
  - There is a contradiction between “JP” and “Judgment” in the first Critique.

## 2.3 Problem of Two Interpretations

- “JP” is not a temporal concept.
  - These interpretations cannot explain other appearance of “JP”.
    - “A *judgment of perception* is just subjective — an objective judgment from perceptions is a *judgment of experience*”. (*The Jäsche Logic* (published in 1800))
    - This distinction also appears in other lectures of *Logic*. *The Hechsel Logic* (around 1780), *The Dohna–Wundlacken Logic* (early 1790s)

## 2.4 Summary & Issue to be solved

- There are two interpretations about “JP”. Both try to position “JP” in the argument of the first Critique.
- Both have a problem about permanence of “JP”.
- What should be solved is the problem of Absence and Permanence of “JP”.

# Contents

- 1. What are “Judgment of experience” and “Judgment of perception”?
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# 3.1 Problem and Solution

- Problem :
  - the permanence of “JP” in some works and the absence of it in both editions of the first Critique.
- Solution :
  - There are two contexts in Kant’s Epistemology. “JP” doesn’t belong to **one context, of the first Critique**, but to **the other context**

## 3.2.1 Normative Context

- Transcendental Argument in the first Critique
  - Investigation about “condition of experience”.
    - → Normative Context
  - Application of Category is one of conditions.
    - “JE” satisfies this.
    - “JP” doesn’t.

## 3.2.1 Normative Context

- “JP” doesn’t satisfy the condition of experience.
  - → This is not the main concept of Normative Context.
- *Prolegomena* is a commentary of the first Critique.
  - The whole context is Normative Context.
  - “JP” is an exception (= just a Negative Role)
- ✘ The whole context of “*Logic*” is also normative, but “JP” appears.



## 3.2.2 Descriptive Context

- “... it is first necessary to remind the reader that we are discussing not the origin of experience, but of that which lies in experience.” (*Prolegomena* §21a.)
- → “Judgment of perception” belongs to “**the origin of experience**” context, as an exception of “**that which lies in experience**” context (**Normative Context**).

## 3.2.2 Descriptive Context

- “... it is first necessary to remind the reader that we are discussing not **the origin of experience**, but of that which lies in experience. The former pertains to **empirical psychology**, ...” (*Prolegomena* §21a.)

## 3.2.2 Descriptive Context

- Context of ‘**Empirical Psychology**’.
  - ⇒ investigation of the actual process of making each concrete experience.
    - → **Descriptive Context**
  - This investigation is not Metaphysics, but Natural Science.

## 3.2.2 Descriptive Context

- Actual Process of making each concrete experience
  - “JP” is a point of process of making an experience.
    - “All our judgments are **at first** merely judgments of perception, ... and we do not till **afterwards** give them a new reference (to an object), ” (*Prolegomena*, §18)
  - Positive Role!

## 3.2.2 Descriptive Context

- Evidence : ‘**Empirical Psychology**’ contains the concept “**Seeming**”, just like “JP”.
  - “The objects of the senses induce us to judge. These judgments are experiences, so far as they are true; but if they are **provisional judgments**, then they are **a seeming**. Seeming precedes experience,” (*Metaphysics L<sub>1</sub>*, ‘**Empirical Psychology**’)

### 3.3 Appearance of “Judgment of perception”

Metaphysics (1770s ??)	First Critique (1 <sup>st</sup> , 1781)	Prolegomena (1783)	First Critique (2 <sup>nd</sup> , 1787)	Metaphysics (1792-03??)	Logic (1800??)
△	×	◎	×	△	◎

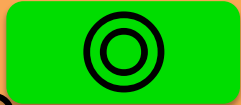
- △ : there doesn't exist the word “Judgment of perception”, but similar concept or sentence appears in “**Empirical Psychology**”.

# 3.4 Two Contexts

Metaphysics (1770s ??)	First Critique (1 <sup>st</sup> , 1781)	Prolegomena (1783)	First Critique (2 <sup>nd</sup> , 1787)	Metaphysics (1792-03??)	Logic (1800??)
△	×	◎	×	△	◎



Whole context is "Normative Context".



"Judgment of perception" appears.

# 3.5 Conclusion

- The Role of “Judgment of perception”
  - *Prolegomena & Logic* : Negative Role
    - as an exception of Normative Context.
  - Other works (Empirical Psychology) : Positive Role
    - as a point of the process of making experience.
- The best position of “Judgment of perception” is the descriptive context.



## (4. Further Study)

- To interpret the first Critique, as just one aspect or context of Kant's epistemology.
  - This context is the condition of the other, descriptive context (Empirical Psychology, as a realm of **Natural Science**).

## (4. Further Study)

- “*Anthropology*” (1798) belongs to Kant’s **descriptive** works.
  - Anthropology is the most important in his philosophy.
    - “The field of philosophy in this cosmopolitan sense can be brought down to the following questions:
      - 1. *What can I know?* [Metaphysics]    2. *What ought I to do?* [Ethics]
      - 3. *What may I hope?* [Religion]        4. *What is man?* [Anthropology]
    - ... Fundamentally, however, we could reckon all of this as anthropology, because the first three questions relate to the last one.” (*The Jäsche Logic* (1800))